

Retired Members Corner



PREPARING TO TRAVEL

Karibu Kenya. Welcome to Kenya. This is the sign that greets you at Jomo Kenyatta Airport on the outskirts of Nairobi. Yes, I'm going to Kenya yet again, God willing. As you read this I am about to return to Africa, that continent I first visited 67 years ago. That first visit was for 18 months in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). This visit will be for 11 days. The first time I sailed there; this time I'll be flying, 25,000 feet up.

What is a fellow well-stricken in years going to be doing in Africa? Surely I'm a bit long in the tooth to be going on safari! Well, I've been invited to attend a conference of African pastors and they want me to speak at it. They've even told me what they want me to speak about.

Nairobi and East Africa is a more pleasant place to be than Accra and West Africa. In fact there is a considerable population of Europeans in Kenya, but very few whites would make their home in Ghana. You could catch every disease known to man – and a few unknown – in West Africa. It used to be called the white man's grave. East Africa is much healthier. Nevertheless, there are health precautions to be taken before I go, including yellow fever vaccination. Travel insurance is also a must in case I have an accident. There is no free NHS in Africa and African road users appear ignorant of any knowledge of a Highway Code. Another requirement is a visa from the Kenya immigration service; this is stamped in your passport giving permission for you to enter their country. With a long journey in view you have to consider what you might require on the journey, and what you should pack in the cases going in the plane's hold. Some people start this process days in advance. It's the night before for me.

Not only must preparation be made prior to setting out, but arrangements have to be in place for your arrival at your destination. I know there will be a welcoming party waiting at the airport to greet me, carry my cases and take me

to the guesthouse where I'll be staying; they know who they are looking for. They'll see me before I see them. I'll be surrounded by willing helpers.

All these preparations to travel remind me of a final journey. We are all on a journey. Some are aware of their destination; some are not. Some are on a broad road, some on a narrow road. Those on the narrow road are citizens journeying to the city of our God. They are fellow-citizens with the saints, of the household of God (Eph 2:19). There is no need to have any vaccinations or inoculations for this journey because there is no disease in the city for which they are bound. There's no need to pack a case because you can't take anything with you. Preparations have been made for your arrival. There's a place prepared for you with your name written on it (John 14:2; Luke 10:20).

You may not have an abundance of this world's goods but you can prepare for your journey by laying up treasure in heaven. How do you do that? You are to set your affection on things above (Col 3:1). Knowledge of God's Word is of eternal value. Jesus said "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away" (Matt 24:35). The treasure we have is within ourselves, for our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God that shines within us (2 Cor 4:6 – 7).

I'm really looking forward to going to Nairobi to meet my Bantu brothers and sisters in Christ. I await, however, with even greater anticipation my journey to that great city whose builder and maker is God. What God has prepared for us is absolutely beyond our imagination (1 Cor 2:9 – 10). We are used to measuring time in days, months and years, all dictated by the sun. God's Word tells us there will be no night there, neither light of the sun. The light will come from the Lord God. Time will be no more. We will reign with Him for ever and ever (Rev 22:5).

Will you enjoy this wonderful prospect? Will you be there when the roll is called up yonder? The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?". They said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house". Nothing could be simpler, yet so many find it hard to do. Do it today and you'll find your life has been transformed. You'll be a new creation in Christ.